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## Learning World Religions and Belief Systems in the Context of Senior High School Students in a Philippine Schools Division

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#### ABSTRACT

Utilizing a quantitative approach in research with descriptive-correlational design and through a survey and test instruments, this study determined the attitudes of Grade 12 students of selected senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya toward religion and the level of their knowledge about the basic tenets, historical contexts, and core teachings of the eight (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Shintoism) world major religions. Findings showed that the Grade 12 students had positive and favorable attitudes toward religion. However, the students generally lacked full knowledge or mastery of the basic tenets, historical contexts and core teachings of the eight world major religions. Finally, the study found out that the attitudes of students toward religion did not affect or influence students' academic performance in the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems subject.

#### INTRODUCTION

Religion does not only function in the society rather most importantly, it makes sense to the individual for it offers peace within, mentally and spiritually. The life of man is unclear; man, always struggles to survive in this world full of challenges and it is only religion that comforts and inspires him to face these adversities. Henceforth, humans cannot live without religion; actually, they are most willing to devote their entire life just to serve the Supreme Being that they believe which include even spending lot of time, money, and energy. The synagogues, ancient tombs, cathedrals, temples, churches and among others are living evidence of how people really lived for their beliefs, a grandest one. In fact, there are even faithful believers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of faith. Some of them even sacrificed their careers and businesses to follow a saintly path; and some even relinquish the world, their family and everything that they have, just to follow their religious teachings in which they believe that it will bring them closer to the Supreme Being (Wasu, 2012). Nevertheless, conflicts should have been ended when man became religious; however, religion became the root of conflicts. It became the reason of the loss of thousands of lives and that caused so much pain for centuries. It is because humans have faith in something that is not a reality for them. Humans fight for they do not agree to each other. They believe that their manners are the real mandate of God and the others do not accept, then it is bound to the absence of peace.

In regard to these advantages and disadvantages of religion, one of the most important elements of a peaceful society is the respect for religious differences. Humans have the freedom to choose their belief system, which is a universal human right wherein it is the responsibility of the states to uphold. These differences should be explored and shared with others; it should be enriched to build unity in diversity.

Hence, with these premises, it is very significant that students should study religion because it will bring them in a series of critical thinking experiences that definitely guide them as they merge themselves in this modern culture.

When studying religion, it will eventually engross students to examine themselves through their cultural viewing platforms encounters on issues of essential human concern.

Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems is a specialized subject under the academic career track and the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) learning strand. In this course, there are eight world's leading religions, mystical and philosophical movements that will be examined so that it will provide a better point of view of these highly powerful traditions, as well as introduction to the idea of religion itself. The major religions being studied in this course are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism. It is necessary that the teaching-learning process for this course should be taken into consideration, which means that there should be various activities, strategies and approaches that will motivate students to learn this discipline (K-12 Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems, 2014).

Therefore, in this call of DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, teachers are being challenged to perform in the best way they can; teachers in the field of Social Studies especially those who are teaching Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems in which this research is focused on are not excused in this endeavor. The curriculum of the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems is arranged in a historical approach particularly, its founder, origin, beliefs, practices, doctrines, sacred texts and issues. At the moment, there are only limited learning modules and materials used in its delivery, hence, it is a major problem for teachers to look for educational materials to make the teaching-learning process more engaging for Senior High School students in order that the vision of DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 will be realized.

As elaborated in the study of Baring et al. (2018), students have a mix of underlying factors that influence the way they feel things around them. These factors include: (1) religious dimension which are on church's affiliation, religious obligations and divine identification; and (2) human dimensions which are on inner traits or dispositions in life, social commitment and becoming human.

It was in these dispositions toward religion that this study was grounded. The researcher, being one of those who work hard for the realization of the objectives of the subject on religion, was able to know the relationship between students' prevailing attitudes and their performance in an achievement test about religion. If there is a strong connection, as suggested by initially reviewed literature, then these attitudes must be taken into consideration and could be utilized to conquer students' weaknesses and enhance their strengths. Finally, this study came up with a baseline data on attitudes and knowledge of senior high school students that will help teachers in teaching the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems.

### Statement of the Problem

The study endeavored to find out the Grade 12 students' attitudes toward religion and level of knowledge in the subject Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems. Specifically, the study sought answers for the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes toward religion of Grade 12 students of selected senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya, along the following areas:
  - 1.1 Religious Dimension; and
  - 1.2 Human Dimension.
2. What is the level of knowledge of Grade 12 students in Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems subject?
3. Is there a significant correlation between attitudes towards religion and level of knowledge in Introduction to World Religions subject of Grade 12 students?

### METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the quantitative approach in research using a survey questionnaire that was patterned from Baring *et al.* (2018) and teacher-made achievement test in data gathering. The method was descriptive – correlational. 312 students from various public senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya (Figure 1) answered the survey on attitudes toward religion as well as taking an achievement test on religion. The results of the attitudes survey were correlated to the scores on the achievement test. To treat data on attitudes toward religion, computed means and standard deviation were presented. To describe the students' level of knowledge in world religions and belief systems subject, computation of means and percentages were done. And, for the correlation between attitudes and level of knowledge in world religions Spearman's rho correlation test was used.

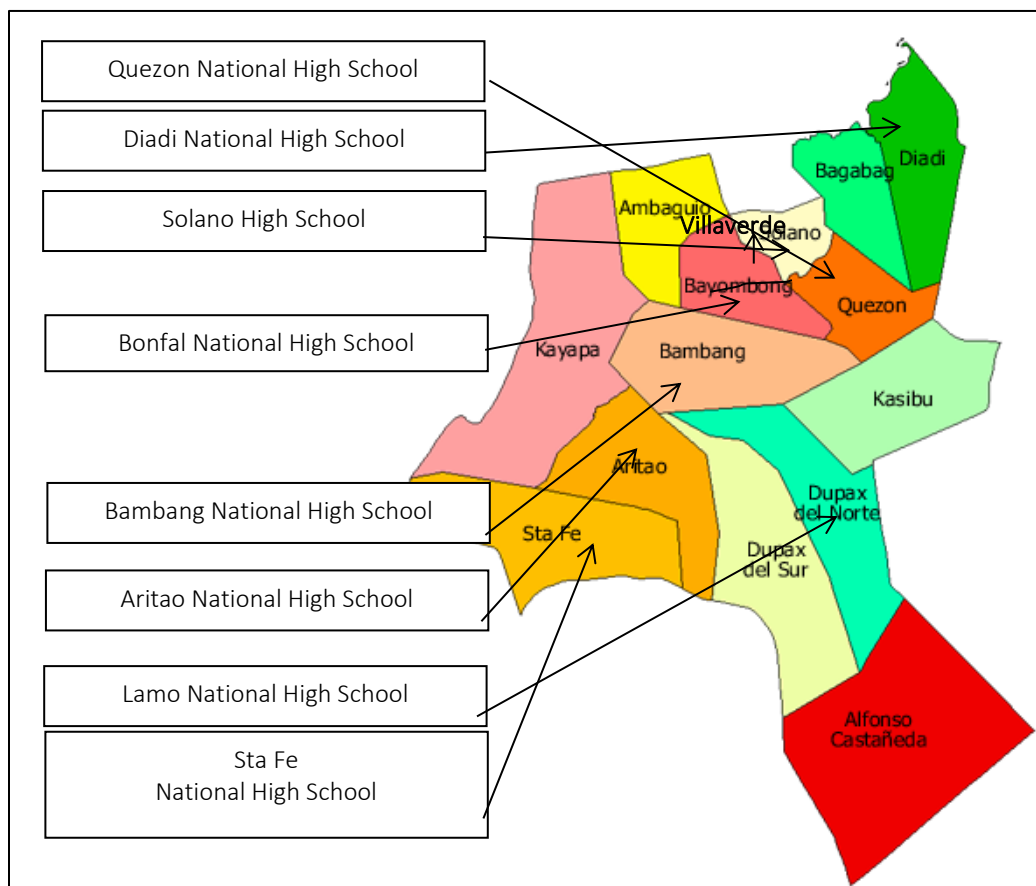


Figure 1. Location Map of the Eight Selected Schools in Nueva Vizcaya

**FINDINGS**

**A.1 Attitudes toward Religion of Grade 12 Students of Selected Senior High Schools in Nueva Vizcaya on Religious Dimension**

**A.1.1 Institutional Engagements**

Table 1. Attitudes toward institutional engagements.

Attitudes on Institutional Engagements	Mn	SD	QD
1. As a religious person, I follow and love my religion.	3.99	0.08	SA
2. I remember God every time I passed by the church.	3.56	0.56	SA
3. If I love my God, then I love also my religion.	3.55	0.68	SA
4. My beliefs reflect my attitudes and decisions.	3.00	0.50	A
5. If I am a religious person, then it must be true to all my words and actions.	2.93	0.68	A
6. I respect those who work as priest/pastor/imam or other leader/s of other religious groups.	3.51	0.58	SA
7. I believe that God created me.	3.76	0.50	SA
8. I am happy that there are different religions/sects in our society.	2.73	0.96	A
9. I believe in the teachings of my church.	3.28	0.61	A
10. I believe that I will be saved.	3.38	0.75	A
Overall Mean	3.36	0.39	A

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 1 shows that half of the presented attitudes regarding institutional engagements were rated with mean ranging from 3.5 – 4 described as *strongly agree*. The other half were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 – 3.49 described as *agree*. The overall mean also yielded on this category. These findings meant that the Grade 12 students had a high regard on their own religious engagements. They had a positive attitude on the basic aspects of religiosity. In particular, almost all of them had the attitude that as religious persons, they followed and loved their religion. They also had a very high regard: on the importance of the

church as a place where God is being praised; on the strong relation between God and religion; to those who work as priest/pastor/imam or other leader/s of other religious groups; and that God created all human beings. The above results were consistent with some sociological studies which revealed that one dimension of religiosity is an affiliation to a certain religion (Voas, 2007). Whether, this religion is one of the highly organized religions diffused in many parts of the world or a small one with membership which is concentrated only in a particular province or region. Similarly, the results of this study confirmed the claim of Baring (2018) that people have a strong attitude towards religious aspects since religiosity is traditionally considered with respect to religious traditions.

### A.1.2. Obligation

Table 2. Attitudes on Obligation.

Attitudes on Obligation	Mn	SD	QD
1. If I am a religious person, then I must go to church.	3.08	0.66	A
2. I consider that religiosity promotes blind faith or blind obedience (to obey without questions).	2.98	0.61	A
3. I observe religious traditions (e.g., devotions, rituals, special days) in my church affiliation.	3.07	0.53	A
4. I am quite conservative for it should be a behavior of a religious person.	2.99	0.56	A
5. I believe that being holy is concerned with religious matters.	2.97	0.72	A
6. I am a compassionate (merciful) person.	3.11	0.57	A
7. As a religious person, I know many things about the Bible.	2.80	0.61	A
8. I feel holy when I am in the church.	3.24	0.66	A
9. I exhibit personal spiritual habits that reflect my religiosity.	3.01	0.53	A
10. I join church activities.	2.91	0.67	A
Overall Mean	3.01	0.61	A

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

It was apparent that all the attitudes were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 – 3.49 described as *agree*. The highest mean rating was the attitude on being a *compassionate (merciful) person (3.11)* and the lowest rating was the statement that *as a religious person, I know many things about the Bible (2.08)*. This finding suggested that the Grade 12 students of selected senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya had a great concern on their obligations as members of a certain religious group. They agreed that: if one considers himself a religious person then he/she must go to church; religiosity promotes blind faith or blind obedience; they have to observe their religious traditions; a religious person must be conservative; being holy is concerned with religious matters; one must be a compassionate or merciful person; as a religious person, knowledge about the Bible is necessary; one feels holy when he/she is in the church; one must exhibit spiritual habits that reflect religiosity and one must join church activities. Similarly, Ratemo *et al.* (2015), in their study about attitudes of students toward Christian Religious Education (CRE) subject, also found out a positive attitude towards the subject. They inferred that their students believed that a religious subject is somehow important to their lives and they have the obligation to act according to the teachings of their church. They also revealed that students were somewhat positive that CRE helps students to acquire knowledge in life (realization that religious subject is not only constrained in the four corners of the classroom) and for further studies after the four year course in college or in the university.

### A.1.3. Divine Affiliation

Table 3. Attitudes on Divine Affiliation

Attitudes on Divine Affiliation	Mn	SD	QD
I must have a personal relationship with God.	3.63	0.56	SA
My life is blessed by God because of my faith in Him.	3.66	0.50	SA
I always try to obey God's will.	3.42	0.62	A
I always put God first in everything that I do.	3.62	0.55	SA
As a spiritual person, I am enlightened and guided by God.	3.42	0.58	A
I put into action the Lord's teachings.	3.29	0.60	A
I can still pray even without going to church.	3.58	0.54	SA
It is important that I dedicate a time for God.	3.50	0.57	SA
I accept as fact that when you serve God wholeheartedly, then it is because of your faith.	3.54	0.53	SA
I believe that religion generates a lifestyle (way of life) that is founded on God	3.44	0.59	A
Overall Mean	3.51	0.056	SA

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

In can be noted in Table 3 that most of the attitudes on divine affiliation were rated with mean ranging from 3.5 – 4 described as *strongly agree*. The overall mean also yielded on this category. Meanwhile, four statement were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 -3.49 described as *agree*. Just like the attitudes on institutional engagements, the foregoing results showed that the Grade 12 students had a very positive regard with the divine teachings of their faith. The students strongly believed in the doctrines that put religion in a high pedestal. They strongly believed in the religious teachings that make a moral society and instill desirable attitudes to individuals. Specifically, they strongly agreed that: they must have a personal relationship with God; their lives are blessed because of their faith in God; they must always put God first in everything that they do; they can still pray even without going to church; it is important that they dedicate a time for God; and they serve God wholeheartedly because of their faith. With these findings, the Grade 12 students were perceived to have emotional dispositions towards God. This means that their personal relationship with God had been given more importance than their institutional orientations with their own church or religious group. This was explained by Baring *et al.* (2018) that the underlying factors about religious dimension could describe students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral appreciations of religion.

## A.2 Attitudes toward Religion of Grade 12 Students of Selected Senior High Schools in Nueva Vizcaya on Human Dimension

### A.2.1. Inner Traits

Table 4. Attitudes on Inner Traits.

Statement on Inner Traits	Mn	SD	QD
1. As a religious person, I realize my faults.	3.54	0.53	SA
2. As a religious person, I am well-disciplined.	3.02	0.55	A
3. My faith motivates me to believe something in my religion.	3.26	0.52	A
4. I feel that a religious person is one who has strong values and morals.	3.19	0.52	A
5. My faith provides me inner peace of mind.	3.41	0.50	A
6. As a religious person, I believe that I must reflect/meditate about my life	3.35	0.52	A
7. As a religious person, I live a stress-free life.	2.84	0.76	A
8. As a religious person, values of spirituality (faith in God) and religion (teachings of your church) must go together.	3.26	0.61	A
9. My faith demands that I follow my own conscience.	3.19	0.63	A
10. As a religious person, I possess positive attitudes towards others.	3.12	0.56	A
Overall Mean	3.21	0.057	A

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 4 showed that except for the attitude that as a religious person, faults are being realized which was rated with mean 3.54 described as *strongly agree*, all the others were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 – 3.49 described as *agree*. The lowest rating was on the attitude that as a religious person, they are well-disciplined (3.02). The findings provided several implications for the students: (1) first, the students had an optimistic realization of themselves as virtuous persons like the acceptance of their own faults, being well-disciplined, having strong values and morals and possession of positive attitudes toward others; Second, the students felt that their faith offers them with inner satisfaction and completeness in life such as the idea that religion provides inner peace of mind, being religious is living a stress-free life, and the demand to follow one's own conscience; and (3) Finally, the students thought of their faith as something that gives them motivation and the belief that religion helps them reflect or meditate about their lives. Moreover, the results in this study could be related to earlier presumptions of religiosity and some doctrines being preached by many religions - that positive inner disposition brings someone closer to God. Peterson (2010) opined that in the course of human daily activity, there are always two things going on – outward action and the inner disposition of the heart toward God – the main focus of God is on the later. The Christian faith taught of an interior Christian disposition which embraces the choice to live a life of integrity and love that blesses others in their presence with dignity and kindness (Otto, 2015). In Hinduism, inner dispositions could be found in the understanding of the four *yogas* or four main paths: Karma – Yoga, Raja – Yoga, Bhakti – Yoga, and Jnana – Yoga. For Buddhism, inner disposition was shown by the founder himself. Before Siddhartha Gautama became known as the Buddha, he practiced meditation through deep concentration (*Dhyana*) and later found Enlightenment.

### A.2.2. Social Commitment

Table 5. Attitudes on Social Commitment

Attitudes on Social Commitment	Mn	SD	QD
1. I am concerned about doing good deeds.	3.25	0.57	A
2. I reject immoral social order.	2.95	0.75	A
3. I have the responsibility to improve the society.	3.16	0.56	A
4. As a religious, I have the tendency to extend my helping hands to the poor.	3.32	0.54	A
5. I serve/help my neighbors without asking something in return.	3.09	0.59	A
6. As a religious person, I must exhibit concern for our environment (tree planting, proper garbage disposal, etc.)	3.17	0.59	A
7. Lifting my spirit and others is the mark of religion.	3.08	0.53	A
8. I believe that spirituality is beyond any religion.	3.18	0.59	A
9. I accept as fact that spirituality indicates how society's beliefs are practiced in daily life.	3.15	0.52	A
10. Being a religious individual, I do not commit mistakes to others.	2.50	0.84	A
Overall Mean	3.08	0.60	A

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

It was evident that all the statements on social commitment were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 – 3.49 described as *agree*. The highest mean rating was the statement that *as a religious, I have the tendency to extend my helping hands to the poor* (3.32) and the lowest was the statement *being a religious individual, I do not commit mistakes to others* (2.50). These findings suggested that the Grade 12 students had a high disposition regarding social commitment or the idea that being religious is demonstrated in significant help given to other people. Specifically, the students agreed that being religious meant: having a concern about doing good deeds; rejection of immoral social order; having the responsibility to improve the society; having the tendency to extend helping hands to the poor; serving/helping one's neighbors without asking something in return; exhibiting concern for the environment (tree planting, proper garbage disposal, etc.); lifting one's spirit and others; believing that spirituality is beyond any religion; accepting as fact that spirituality indicates how society's beliefs are practiced in daily life; and not committing mistakes to others.

One of the results in the research of Ratemo *et al.* (2015) was consistent to the findings of the foregoing study. Said research found out that students had greatly believed that Christian Religion Education (CRE) helped them relate well with others. This was reinforced by the authors claiming that when students study CRE they learn Christian values that enhance the creation of a just society, which requires them to practice the Christian moral values as they relate with others in society. Furthermore, the authors mentioned that the study of a certain religious subject helps students to develop a sense of self- worth and identity for themselves and others. This also confirmed earlier study on social commitment by Rodger (1982), as cited by Ratemo *et al.* (2015) which relates that religious subjects teach students to appreciate and tolerate other people and their ways of life and encourages students to live in love, peace and harmony.

### A.2.3. Becoming Human

Table 6. Attitudes on Becoming Human.

Attitudes on Becoming Human	Mn	SD	QD
1. Believing in faith involves looking at my life with purpose.	3.35	0.54	A
2. Faith essentially completes me as a person.	3.20	0.62	A
3. I do not feel that religion keeps us blinded from the truths.	2.97	0.73	A
4. As a religious person, I keep a clean heart and mind.	3.13	0.54	A
5. Religion taught me to face life's problems without questioning God.	3.25	0.68	A
6. I am a loving person and I can always be trusted.	3.20	0.53	A
7. I have a sincere heart.	3.38	0.60	A
8. I am a role model.	2.98	0.58	A
9. Religiosity involves getting connected to my emotions and physical appearance.	3.15	0.60	A
10. Being a holy person, I value life.	3.35	0.59	A
Overall Statement	3.19	0.60	A

Legend: 1 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.5 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 2.5 – 3.49: Agree (A); 3.5 – 4: Strongly Agree (SA)

Just like social commitment, it was noticeable that all the attitude statements on becoming human were rated with mean ranging from 2.5 – 3.49 described as *agree*. The highest rating was on *having a sincere heart* (3.35) while the lowest was on *being a role*

*model (2.98)*. These findings implied that, the Grade 12 students generally agreed on the aspects of religion regarding the desire to promote the well-being of others. In particular, they agreed that: believing in faith involves looking at one's life with purpose; faith essentially completes one as a person; religion does not keep the followers blinded from the truths; as a religious person, one must have to keep a clean heart and mind; religion taught individuals to face life's problems without questioning God; they are loving persons and they can always be trusted; they have a sincere heart; they are a role model; religiosity involves getting connected to their emotions and physical appearance; and being a holy person mean valuing life.

The above results could be related to one of the learning competencies in the first part of the curriculum guide for the *Introduction to World Religions*. Among others, the subject enables students to differentiate between and among the concepts of spirituality, theology, and philosophy of religion. Specifically, the curriculum guide provides that the students must be able to differentiate between religion as humans' way to God, theology as a study of God's way to humans and philosophy as a reflection of humans' lived experiences of God.

The religious and human dimensions of religion are two different aspects. Human dimension of religiosity like being a role model, having a sincere heart, loving and can always be trusted, can be manifested even without belief in the supernatural while religious dimension entails religious affiliations, obligations and connection with the divine. In this case, it is noteworthy to highlight the similarity of the above results to the presentation of Baring (2018) that there is the essential constitution of the human and social elements in the spiritual and religious domains. The youth today had been observed to have renewed interest towards youth spirituality in negotiated forms as an essential dimension of religion that sees a thriving experience-based spirituality (McQuillan 2006).

## B. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems

### B.1 Judaism

Table 7. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Judaism

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. All of the following are patriarchs of Judaism except A. Jacob B. Paul* C. Isaac D. Abraham	259	83	Satisfactory
2. The first book of the Hebrew Bible which literally means " <i>origin</i> " contains A. legendary stories of Adam, Eve and Noah* C. rule of Saul over the Israelites B. stories of the Israelites in Canaan D. journey of Moses from Egypt	218	70	Did not meet expectation
3. What is the basis of the Jews in saying that they have the special responsibility to the rest of the creation? A. When Moses received the ten commandments B. When God created the universe through His commands* C. When God reveals Himself to Abraham D. When people understood that God created them in His image and likeness	12	4	Did not meet expectation
4. Why is it important for the Jews to venerate the Sabbath day? A. It is the last day that God created the universe. B. It is a time for the Jews to rest. C. It is the day that God rested after creating the world.* D. It is a mandate given by God to all mankind.	156	50	Did not meet expectation
5. Why is it that the Jews have to drain the blood on a meat before cooking? A. Blood gives life which is sacred to God.* B. Animals have life, hence, it should be revered. C. It has nothing to do with their belief system. D. It is part of the commandment of Yahweh.	156	50	Did not meet expectation
6. What is the reason behind the celebration of the Feast of the Passover? A. It commemorates the liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt.* B. It celebrates the idea that Moses the Ten Commandments. C. It recognizes the power of God when Moses divided the ocean. D. It reveals God's grace and blessings to the Jews.	109	35	Did not meet expectation
7. What is the symbolic meaning of the unleavened bread for the Jews? A. Freedom and Liberation C. Commandment and Mandate B. Covenant and Relationship* D. Sanctity and Covenant	88	28	Did not meet expectation

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
8. What is the underlying reason of the Jews why they only consider Jesus Christ as a prophet? A. Jesus Christ is the God of the Christians. B. Jesus Christ did not come from a royal family. C. Jews are still waiting for the coming of the Messiah which will happen soon. D. Jews' expectations about the Messiah did not coincide with Jesus Christ.*	25	8	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	128	41	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation

It was evident that only one item got a *satisfactory* rating, this was the first question and all about the patriarchs of Judaism, all the others got below 75% described as *did not meet expectation*. The Grade 12 students scored the lowest on the question: *What is the basis of the Jews in saying that they have the special responsibility to the rest of the creation?*, where the correct answer was option B, *when God created the universe through His commands*. In this item, only 12 or 4% of the students got the correct answer. The general results could be associated to some prevailing aspects regarding learning religious subject. First was the context when the test was taken. Since the topics covered in the test were not considered to be a general knowledge about religion, it is possible that students were not prepared or had not reviewed when they took the scheduled test. Second, it might be possible for the students to have not taken the test seriously since there were no tangible and intangible reasons or rewards.

## B.2 Christianity

Table 8. Level of Knowledge of Students in terms of the Items on Christianity.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. What is the concept of the Holy Trinity? It is a belief A. of three Gods in one persona.* C. that God is everywhere. B. of three Gods in three personas. D. that God can transform Himself.	125	40	Did not meet expectation
2. Why do the Christians conduct baptism? A. It signifies repentance and cleansing.* B. It implies that you are a member of an institution. C. It shows that you are welcomed in the Christian community. D. It entails that you believe God as omnipotent.	217	70	Did not meet expectation
3. According to Christian beliefs, what will happen to the soul if a person dies? A. The soul of a person will go to heaven. B. The soul will be judge according to his deeds in the world.* C. The soul will be roaming in the world. D. The soul will be burned in hell.	220	71	Did not meet expectation
4. It is said to be the accounts of Jesus' life. A. Gospel* B. Letters of Saint Paul C. 1 Peter D. Universal Epistles	238	77	Fairly Satisfactory
5. Who was the Emperor who legalized Christianity in 313 C.E. after declaration of the Edict of Milan? A. Constantine* B. Julius Caesar C. Nero Caesar D. Commodus	172	55	Did not meet expectation
6. It is a collection of songs, stories, poetry, letters, history and literature. A. Tanakh B. Holy Bible* C. Hebrew Bible D. Decalogue	139	45	Did not meet expectation
7. It refers to the season observed by Christians in preparation for Easter. A. Lent* B. Christmas C. Advent D. Ordinary Time	130	42	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	177	57	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.



Except for the item referring to the *accounts of Jesus' life*, where the answer was option A, the *Gospel*, and where the students scored between 75 – 79 described as *fairly satisfactory*, all the other items got scores below 75% described as *did not meet expectation*. The lowest was on the question: *What is the concept of the Holy Trinity?*, where the correct answer was option A, *It is a belief of three Gods in one persona*. There were 120 or 40% of the students who got the correct answer in this item. Similar to the items on Judaism, the findings here suggested that the students should be given more attention and to be taught with greater emphasis on the core doctrines of the Christian faith. The topics presented here covered the contents of the lessons that would enable students to explain the ultimate teaching of the Christian faith which refers to the message that a loving God sent His begotten Son in order to redeem humankind from eternal damnation. To be able to realize this learning competency, the students needed more mastery and deeper understanding about the Christian faith. It is not enough that students memorize the contents but they have to relate with their experiences that could give them more retention and understanding.

### B.3 Islam

Table 9. Level of Knowledge of Students in terms of the Items on Islam.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. Why is it that Muhammad is considered to be the Seal of the Prophets? A. He is the Envoy of Allah. C. He is considered to be a divine being. B. He is the Last Prophet.* D. He spreads the words of Allah.	88	28	Did not meet expectation
2. How do the Muslims look at their sacred scripture known as Qu'ran? A. Literal Word of Allah* C. Explanations of the Prophets B. Muhammad's Understanding D. Muhammad's Revelation	109	35	Did not meet expectation
3. What constitute the core of Islamic message? A. A Moslem must learn the Qu'ran. B. A Moslem must visit Mecca. C. There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.* D. There must be a close relationship between Allah and His people.	118	38	Did not meet expectation
4. How many times do the Muslims pray? A. three B. Five* C. four D. two	121	39	Did not meet expectation
5. Why do the Muslims if possible have to memorize the Qu'ran? A. It is an obligation to Muhammad. C. It is a status symbol.* B. It is a blessing from Allah. D. It is an obligation for Islamic faith.	23	7	Did not meet expectation
6. Why do Muslims reject the divinity of Jesus Christ? A. It violates fundamental principle that there is just one God.* B. It did not come from a royal family. C. Jesus Christ is just a prophet. D. Jesus Christ spreads profanation.	143	46	Did not meet expectation
7. What is the day intended for public prayer for the Muslims? A. Friday* B. Sunday C. Tuesday D. Wednesday	174	56	Did not meet expectation
8. It is a religious journey by a believer to a sacred site. A. Travel B. Pilgrimage* C. Recollection D. Journey	166	53	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	117	38	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.

It was noticeable that all the items about Islam got scores below 75 described as *did not meet expectation*. The Grade 12 students scored highest on the question: *What is the day intended for public prayer for the Muslims?*, where the correct answer was option A, *Friday*. 174 or 56% of the sampled students got the correct response. On the other hand, the students scored lowest on the question: *Why do the Muslims if possible have to memorize the Qu'ran?*, where the correct answer was option C, *it is a status symbol*. There were only 23 or 7% of the students who got the correct answer in this item. The results meant that the students were not familiar with the basic tenets of the Islam religion. They also needed to be guided and taught seriously so that they could embrace its doctrines even they do not belong with this religion. The results could also be attributed to the attitudes of students toward a religion that is not familiar to them. Ratemo *et al.* (2018) then argued that it is therefore the duty of the

teacher to help students change their attitude towards the positive. The teachers have to work with his own self and develop his inner self so that he can understand himself and the students who behave and react to situations in accordance with how the teacher relates to their ego.

#### B.4 Hinduism

Table 10. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Hinduism.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. What is the underlying reason why Hinduism is called <i>Vaidika Dharma</i> ? A. It is full of knowledge about life. C. Sanskrit is the language being used. B. Vedas are the basis of their beliefs.* D. It focuses on the cultivation of virtues	96	31	Did not meet expectation
2. It is an epic poem that is 15 times longer than the Bible which narrates the story of an ongoing war among family members. A. Mahabharata* B. Ramayana C. Dharma Shastras D. Panchantantra	100	32	Did not meet expectation
3. These are legal treatises that emphasize the importance of practicing virtue. A. Mahabharata C. Ramayana B. Dharma Shastras* D. Bhagavad Gita	36	12	Did not meet expectation
4. What is the doctrine of Atman? A. There is a soul in each and every living creature. B. It emphasizes the idea of good and bad karma. C. It explains the concept of reincarnation.* D. Brahma is the uppermost god.	116	37	Did not meet expectation
5. " <i>Sanatana Dharma</i> ", the formal name of Hinduism, means _____. A. Heavenly Light C. Eternal Religion* B. Way of Truth D. Consecrated Religion	75	24	Did not meet expectation
6. Who is the highest god in the Hindu pantheon and one of the Trimurthi? A. Brahma* B. Shiva C. Durga Devi D. Vishnu	117	38	Did not meet expectation
7. It the highest and purest of all castes. A. Shudra B. Brahmin* C. Ranjanyas D. Vaishya	156	50	Did not meet expectation
8. What is the school in Hindu thought that is most concerned with logic and establishment of proof? A. Nyaya* B. Samkhya C. Vedanta D. Mimamsa	87	28	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	97	31	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.

Again, all the items fell below 75% described as *did not meet expectation* indicating also that students are not familiar with the Hinduism religion. The highest item was on the common knowledge about Hinduism with regards to its highest and purest caste which was the *Brahmin*. Half of the students got the correct answer in this item. Meanwhile the lowest was on the *legal treatises that emphasize the importance of practicing virtue*, where the answer was option B, *Dharma Shastras*. 36 or 12% of the students got the correct response in this item.

As one of the major and organized world religions (known to be the oldest one), students should also learn to appreciate the Hinduism religion not only that it went through colorful history but because it holds practical doctrines that could be embraced to have a meaningful life. For instance, this religion preaches the concepts of *dharma* – earthly duties, *samsara* – belief in the cycle of death and rebirth to which all lives in the material world have to go through, and the doctrine of *Atman* – which explains the concept of reincarnation. The core doctrine of Hinduism is also noteworthy to know that is probably the reason why one of the learning competencies in this subject is to explain this core doctrine which is on *the attainment of liberation in the identification of Atman and Brahman through the Four Yogas*.

**B.5. Buddhism**

Table 11. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Buddhism.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. Why is it that Buddhism is said to be a “ <i>nontheistic religion</i> ”? A. It encourages respect toward the deities but it adheres that they are not to be worshipped.* B. Human beings are more advantaged than the immortals. C. Human condition has the combination of pain and pleasure. D. Buddhists don’t have faith in the existence of divinities.	135	43	Did not meet expectation
2. What is the cause of suffering in the Buddhist’s belief? A. Pleasure B. Pain C. Desire* D. Faith	151	49	Did not meet expectation
3. Training the mind to be focused and calm A. Right Awareness C. Right Mindfulness* B. Right Effort D. Right Livelihood	186	60	Did not meet expectation
4. Learning to be attentive to the present moment A. Right Concentration* C. Right Attention B. Right Exertion D. Right Livelihood	118	38	Did not meet expectation
5. Doing one’s best in doing good things at the right time A. Right Concentration C. Right Attention B. Right Effort* D. Right Occupation	91	29	Did not meet expectation
6. Avoiding lies, unkind speech and frivolous talks A. Right Action C. Right Speech* B. Right Thought D. Right View	135	43	Did not meet expectation
7. Awareness of the law of <i>karma</i> and the four Noble Truths A. Right Action C. Right Speech B. Right Thought* D. Right View	202	65	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	145	47	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.

As shown, all the items got a rating below 75 described as *did not meet expectation* indicating also that the Grade 12 student were not familiar of the basic tenets and historical context of the Buddhism religion. The highest rating was on *training the mind to be focused and calm*, where the correct answer was *right mindfulness*. 186 or 80% of the students got the correct answer in this item. The lowest rating was on *learning to be attentive to the present moment*, where the right answer was *right concentration*. The students scored 118 or 38% in this item.

**B.6 Taoism**

Table 12. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Taoism.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. All of the following are practices of Taoism except _____. A. Feng Shui B. Reading scripture* C. Yoga D. Fortune Telling	137	44	Did not meet expectation
2. Life is to be lived simply and is to be lived in harmony with _____. A. Family B. God C. Nature* D. Neighbor	110	35	Did not meet expectation
3. For 2000 years, Taoism was the central religion in China that was mixed with Buddhism to produce what other major religion? A. Hinduism B. Zen Buddhism * C. Confucianism D. Shintoism	53	17	Did not meet expectation
4. What is the message of <i>Daodejing</i> ? A. Live a life patterned after the way of nature.* B. Live your life to the fullest. C. Live a life following God’s will.	48	15	Did not meet expectation

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
D. Live a life following the order of man.			
5. What is the <i>wu wei</i> belief of the Daoist? A. Simplicity of Lifestyle*                      C. Live a humble life. B. Connect to God                                      D. Make a way for others	65	21	Did not meet expectation
6. The political message of Daoism was _____. A. to follow rules, especially filial piety B. to live a simple life and conform to the state's expectations C. the state controls civil life so that individuals can meditate D. return to primal simplicity, with the state interfering as little as possible*	45	14	Did not meet expectation
7. Chinese people take a balanced attitude toward _____. A. Changing circumstances*                      C. Their own luck B. The fortune of others                              D. Static events	86	28	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	78	25	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.

Table 12 shows that the Grade 12 students again did not meet the desired expectations on the items about Taoism religion, garnering mean percent below 75%. The highest mean percent was on item 1 with 137 or 44% out of the 312 students who got the correct responses. The question was about the *practices of Taoism*, where the students needed to evaluate which was not a Taoism practice and the correct answer is *reading scripture*. Meanwhile, the lowest recorded mean percent was on item 4 with 48 or 15% of students who got the correct responses. The question was all about *the message of Dodejing* which related to the idea of *living a life patterned after the way of nature*.

For Taoism religion, the core teaching needed to be explained by the student was the condition of *becoming one with Tao*. By answering items 2, 4, 5 and 6, a sufficient explanation could be advanced about becoming one with “Tao”. Among others, it meant living a simple life in harmony with nature and less interference with other aspects like politics and culture. The students, however, scored very low in these items indicating their very low level of knowledge with regards to the basic aspects of Taoism religion.

### B.7 Confucianism

Table 13. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Confucianism.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. Is Confucianism a religion? A. Yes, if we accept what Confucius believed but never taught explicitly that the Supreme Being governs everything.* B. Yes, in conflict with the enemies he looked for help from above and for assistance. C. Yes, life and death are fixed, that prosperity and admirations are in heaven’s hands. D. Yes, an emperor is chosen by God.	182	59	Did not meet expectation
2. Which of these is not a place other than China where Confucian ethics and ideals have remodeled society, providing moral underpinning and guidance to social relationships at all levels? A. Vietnam                      B. Indonesia*                                      C. Japan D. Korea	86	28	Did not meet expectation
3. The five relationships taught by Confucius encouraged people to _____. A. respect and venerate environment.                      C. improve their position in life B. serve the needs of religious leaders.                      D. maintain social and political order*	115	37	Did not meet expectation
4. Confucianism emphasizes the idea that _____. A. government should own the means of production	173	56	Did not meet expectation

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
B. an individual's individual aims are more important than the aims of the crowd C. each person has an important responsibility to family and society* D. financial achievement is more necessary than knowledge and learning			
5. According to the teachings of Confucius, the key to the successful organization of society is that _____. A. the leader should be selected representatively B. the evil in people must be excluded C. individuals should know and do what is expected of them* D. ancestor worship should be discontinued	171	55	Did not meet expectation
6. The teachings of Confucius encourage people to _____. A. believe in reincarnation. C. follow a code of moral conduct.* B. put their personal concern first. D. discard government power.	144	46	Did not meet expectation
7. Confucianism in the traditional China served to _____. A. emphasize material wealth. C. maintain social order.* B. create cultural turbulence. D. support democratic government.	181	58	Did not meet expectation
8. Which belief is most closely associated with the philosophy of Confucianism? A. filial piety* B. prayer C. reincarnation D. samsara	57	18	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	139	45	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation.

It was clearly shown also that for the Confucianism, all the computed mean percent were below 75 described as *did not meet expectation*. The highest mean percent was on the question: *Is Confucianism a religion?*, where the correct answer was option A, that is: *Yes, if we accept what Confucius believed but never taught explicitly that the Supreme Being governs everything*. 182 or 59% of the students got the correct answer in this item.

On the other hand, the lowest recorded mean percent was on the question: *Which belief is most closely associated with the philosophy of Confucianism?*, where the correct answer was option A, *filial piety*, with 57 or 18% out of 312 students got the correct responses.

The findings suggested, just like those earlier evaluated major world religions, that, in general, the Grade 12 students lacked the basic knowledge about Confucianism religion. Thus, the students should really have to be guided and taught using varieties and alternative ways as well as functional and relevant instructional materials that would enhance long term memory and processed understanding.

### B.8 Shintoism

Table 14. Level of Knowledge of Grade 12 Students in terms of the Items on Shintoism.

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
1. Shinto literally means “the way of the Kami” rather than “the way to the Gods”. Why is this so? A. Shintoists do not have dogmas.* C. Shinto is a native religion of Japan. B. Shinto is not a religious doctrine. D. Shinto is collective of all faiths in Japan.	54	17	Did not meet expectation
2. Which of these best describes the kami? A. animal and nature totems B. divine powers of the cosmos in the form of deities, features of nature, and exceptional humans* C. invisible ancestors and the spirits of those who haven't moved on D. Shinto's pantheon of gods	122	39	Did not meet expectation
3. According to Shinto, the <i>cosmos</i> is a sacred place, and humans are themselves are _____ of the kami. A. divine children* C. divine equals B. worshippers D. merely the followers	104	33	Did not meet expectation

Items	Correct Responses		Qualitative Description
	F	%	
4. A Shinto shrine, called _____, is the “dwelling place of the kami.” A. temple      B. michi      C. tori*      D. jinja	86	28	Did not meet expectation
5. The sections of the Japanese creation story in the text focus mostly on _____. A. the birth of humans      C. the birth of Mount Fuji* B. the birth of kami      D. the birth of nature	66	21	Did not meet expectation
6. According to Shinto myth, the Japanese imperial family can be traced back to _____. A. The Sun Goddess*      C. The Moon God B. The Storm God      D. The kami of Mt. Fuji	75	24	Did not meet expectation
7. The Shinto ritual of harae focuses on _____. A. Purification*      C. Appeasing the gods B. Feeding the hungry ghosts      D. Entertaining the congregation	100	32	Did not meet expectation
Overall Mean	87	28	Did not meet expectation

Legend: 90 – 100: Outstanding; 85 – 89: Very Satisfactory; 80 – 84: Satisfactory; 75 – 79: Fairly Satisfactory; below 75: Did not meet expectation

It was evident that all the computed mean percents were below 75% described as *did not meet expectation*. The highest mean percent was on the question about the statements that *best describe the kami*, where the correct answer was: *divine powers of the cosmos in the form of deities, features of nature, and exceptional humans*. While the lowest was on the question: *Shinto literally means “the way of the Kami” rather than “the way to the Gods”*. *Why is this so?*, where the correct response was option A, *Shintoists do not have dogmas*.

These findings meant that, just like the other world major religions, the Grade 12 students had very low level of knowledge on the basic tenets, historical context and core teachings of said religions.

### C. Significant Correlation between Attitudes Toward Religion and Level of Knowledge in Introduction to World Religion and Belief Systems

Table 15. Significant Correlation between Attitudes Toward Religion and Level of Knowledge in Introduction to World Religions.

Spearman’s rho (N = 312)	Level of Knowledge		
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.	Decision
Attitudes Toward Religion	-0.55	0.333	Accept Ho

As shown by the computed p-value which was greater than .05, attitudes toward religion did not have significant correlation with the level of knowledge of Grade 12 students of selected senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya. This showed that the attitudes toward religion did not affect or influence students’ level of knowledge on the said subject and/or *vice versa*.

This result was somehow similar with the findings of Baring *et al.* (2018) which considered other aspects rather than the level of knowledge of students. In their study, other important factors that correlate with attitudes toward religion are: personal and social life – this underscores students’ beliefs towards ethical and moral issues; ethical mindset; and development of religious institutions. All of these were found to have strong relation or link relative to students’ attitudes toward religion.

On the other hand, the finding above contradicted the principle forwarded by Ratemo *et al.* (2018) that the attitude of the students toward religious education greatly determines the performance of the individual as it leads to social and academic problems. They believed that students have the realization that if the teacher has failed to pass on relevant information to the class, this encourages misconception of ideas and low level of academic performance.

One possible explanation why there was no significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitudes toward religion of Grade 12 students was due to the results of these two assessments. It was apparent that they had somewhat positive perception about religion but generally did not meet the desired expectation with regards to the level of knowledge. This could further be explained by the fact that perception is a subjective aspect while level of knowledge is an objective one. In general, the result reinforced the premise advanced by Baring (2018) that religion is all about faith and practice. From sociological perspective, this is what they called inward and outward dimensions (Mangahas & Guerrero, 1992, as cited by Baring, 2018). Some religions, however, may be strict with their indoctrination process like one could not be given a religious certificate without

the knowledge of the basic teachings while others have nominal members who only go to church when their busy schedule permits. The latter, notwithstanding, could not be judged as sacrilegious as he/she might not be knowledgeable with the doctrines but has desirable traits and amiable characters.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the he Grade 12 students of selected senior high schools in Nueva Vizcaya had positive and favorable attitudes toward religion. However, the students generally lacked full knowledge or mastery of the basic tenets, historical contexts and core teachings of the eight world major religions. The attitudes of students toward religion did not affect or influence students' academic performance in the *Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems* subject.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Considering the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are strongly suggested:
2. Positive and favorable attitudes toward religion should be translated academically to provide more desirable result and achievement. These attitudes should also be employed to establish a good relationship between teachers and students that would eventually lead to enhanced motivation, active participation and meaningful exchanges of ideas for academic and practical application.
3. The lack of knowledge and mastery of the subject can be resolved through various the pragmatic principles of education. Foremost is the guidance of the teacher in carrying out the subject in a manner that active participation is being fostered. The environment should not be intimidating (a religious subject must not really be intimidating and threatening) and should stimulate critical and dynamic ideas. The teachers should also find many ways to sustain students' active involvement in the class which will later result to long term retention of ideas; and
4. Attitudes and level of knowledge can be significantly correlated with each other, since the result yielded no correlation, there must be relevant and functional activities that would provide positive relations between the two. The teachers should always find alternative ways to make the learning process a worthwhile experience for students so that their religious subject must not only be accomplished for academic purposes but also for practical purposes.

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